

luded to in his message, and the nature of the secrets they preserve.

“*Resolved*, That for the purposes of the inquiries submitted to them, the Committee be empowered to send for persons and papers, if they shall deem it necessary to their investigation.”

A few days subsequent to the passage of these resolutions, and before any action was had by the Committee, namely, on the 17th of January last, an order was adopted by the House, authorizing and directing the Committee to examine witnesses under the solemn sanction of an oath, which order is in the words following, viz:

“*Ordered*, That the Select Committee heretofore appointed to consider and report upon all that part of the Governor’s Message which relates to secret political societies be authorized and *directed* in their investigations to examine witnesses on oath, and that all said witnesses attending and testifying before said Committee be allowed and paid the same milage and per diem as is usually allowed to witnesses in attendance upon the Circuit Court of Anne Arundel County.”

This minority being anxious to perform faithfully and diligently the duties enjoined upon the Committee by the Honorable House, and looking to these resolutions and this order only for guidance as to the scope of their duties and mode of performing them, believed themselves called upon, in conjunction with the other members of the Committee, to summon such witnesses before them, for examination *on oath*, as they might be advised and had good reason to believe possessed and could give information material and important to the elucidation of the truth in regard to the subjects matter of inquiry committed to them. They felt themselves charged by the resolutions to inquire by such means, first, “Whether any, and if any, what secret political societies exist in this State?”

Secondly, “Whether any political society, secret or open, is known to encourage or pursue purposes which tend to the subversion of the well established and deeply cherished principles of our Government?”

Thirdly, “Whether any, and if any, what society or portion of the people of this State, or any of the United States, have introduced religious issues into the field of political agitation?”

Fourthly, To ascertain, as far as might be within their power, “What is the character and import of the secrets which are supposed to be held or maintained by such societies?”